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Letter dated 8 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instruction of the Government of Georgia, I again wish to draw the attention of the Security Council to the escalation of tensions in Abkhazia, Georgia, emanating both from actions of the Abkhaz separatists and involvement of external factors.

The Georgian side expresses deep concern that this time it is the statement of the State Duma of the Russian Federation that serves to offset prospects of achieving significant progress in the peace process in Abkhazia, Georgia.

The legislative body of the Russian Federation, speculating on groundless arguments, reacted by issuing a statement, which contains unveiled threats against Georgia regarding the understanding reached between the Heads of State of Georgia and the Russian Federation. This act, along with the illegal elections of 2 March 2002, held by the Abkhaz regime (S/2002/220), is aimed at encouraging separatism.

Notwithstanding all these obstacles, the Government of Georgia reaffirms its commitment to the peaceful settlement of all problems by availing itself of the genuine support of international community and all friendly States, including the Russian Federation.

In connection with the above, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, dated 7 March 2002 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Peter **Chkheidze**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 8 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English and Russian]

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

After the tragic events of 11 September, Georgia, having completely supported the international anti-terrorist coalition, and having undertaken the obligation to struggle actively with this evil, undertakes all necessary measures, in close cooperation with its partners in the coalition, to eliminate any possibility of having its territory used by international terrorist structures, and with this end, to establish the necessary control, to guide the legitimate order and to ensure needed law and order on all State territory.

The aspiration of Georgia, with the help of the friendly States, the United States of America in particular, to train the Georgian anti-terrorist units to strengthen armed forces and national security, were unfortunately improperly understood by certain political forces of the Russian Federation, including deputies of the State Duma. Confirmation of that is the statement of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation concerning the "Situation in Georgia in connection with the military presence of the United States of America on its territory", adopted on 6 March 2002.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia considers as absurd the statements of the Russian lawmakers about ostensibly created threats to the security not only of the Russian Federation, but also of the self-declared Republics of "Abkhazia" and "South Ossetia", in connection with the cooperation of Georgia and the United States of America in the struggle against terrorism.

It is, at the least, bewildering that, while declaring respect for the territorial integrity of Georgia, the State Duma unambiguously calls for the establishment of closer relations with the leaders of separative regimes and considers it possible to unilaterally interact with separatists on the safety of the State frontier of the Russian Federation. At the same time, declaring that "the Duma is ready to discuss other ways of furthering the formation of the statehood of Abkhazia and South Ossetia" — from which, through the efforts of the separatists, and with the direct participation of the destructive forces of a neighbouring State, more than 300,000 civilians were forced to flee, "true patriots" from the State Duma openly encourage aggressive separatism, not only in the neighbouring State, but also in the Russian Federation — itself.

By its statement, the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation flagrantly tramples on the conventional norms and principles of international law and numerous decisions of authoritative international forums, including the Council of State Leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia emphasizes that the adoption of such a statement is an attempt at unconcealed intervention in internal affairs, an invasion of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and is directed at undermining the process of the peaceful settlement of conflicts. All this jeopardizes

the recently achieved efforts of the international community, and positive shifts in the field of the full-scale settlement of conflicts.

It is obvious that the similar statement of the State Duma does not promote development of good-neighbourliness or friendly, equal relations between the two States and contradicts the positive tendencies of constructive cooperation which emerged during the last meetings between the Presidents of Georgia and the Russian Federation which, of course, is only regrettable.

Tbilisi, 7 March 2002